



A Summary of Effectiveness Studies

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Introduction

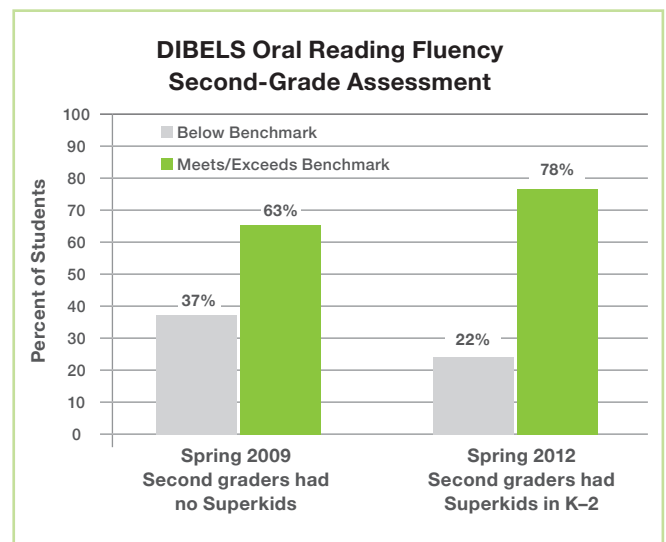
This brochure presents results from ongoing research into the effectiveness of the K–2 Superkids Reading Program and the pre-K program, *Happily Ever After*. To date, Superkids research has been conducted in schools in nearly every region of the United States and with every major student group. This large body of evidence confirms that Superkids is highly effective in improving reading achievement for children of all backgrounds in all types of schools.

Effectiveness Research

1 Four-Year Longitudinal Study: Superkids Prepares Students for Third-Grade Success

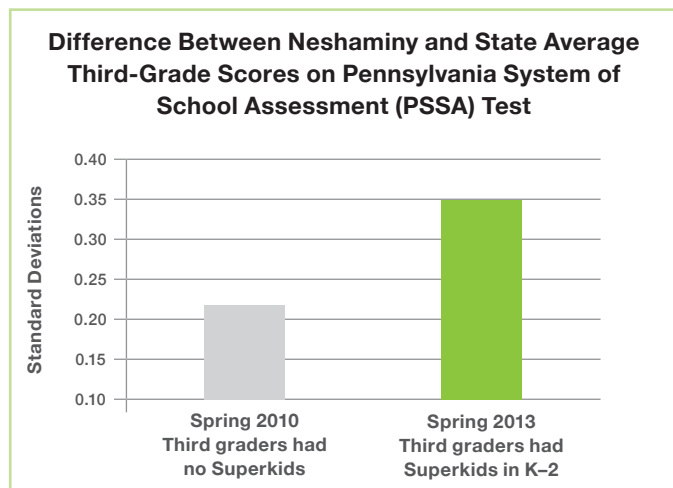
Neshaminy School District in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, began using Superkids with about 1,800 students in kindergarten through second grade in the 2009–10 school year. Dr. Jerome D'Agostino, professor of educational policy and leadership at The Ohio State University, analyzed the district's 2007–2012 DIBELS data to measure the impact of Superkids over time. With this data, it was possible to measure the three-year impact of the Superkids program.

Dr. D'Agostino found that the percentage of students meeting benchmark on the DIBELS second-grade Oral Reading Fluency measure increased from 63% before Superkids was implemented to 78% after three years of Superkids. This means that nearly 100 more children in a class of about 610 reached the proficient level of reading fluency. During the same period, the number of students performing below benchmark declined from 37% to 22%.



Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3



grade PSSA scores to the state average, with differences measured in standard deviations. In both spring 2010 and spring 2013, Neshaminy’s third graders scored higher than the state average. But in spring 2013, after three years of Superkids implementation, the gap had increased significantly. Using Superkids, Neshaminy students’ performance on the third-grade PSSA test had improved at a faster rate than the state average. ■

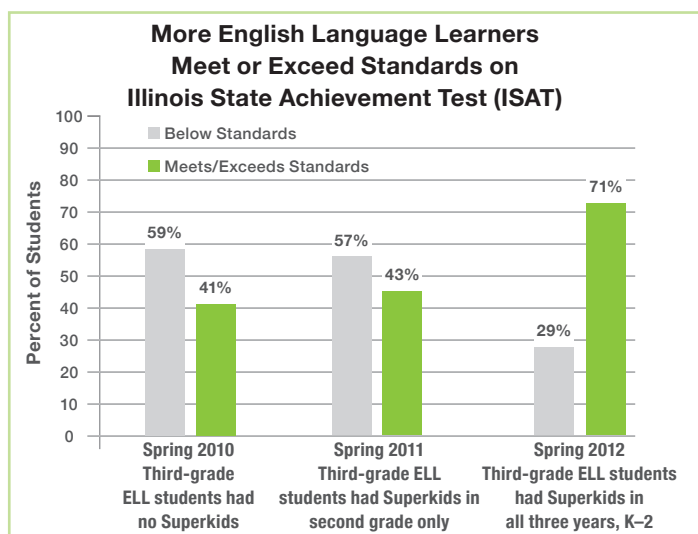
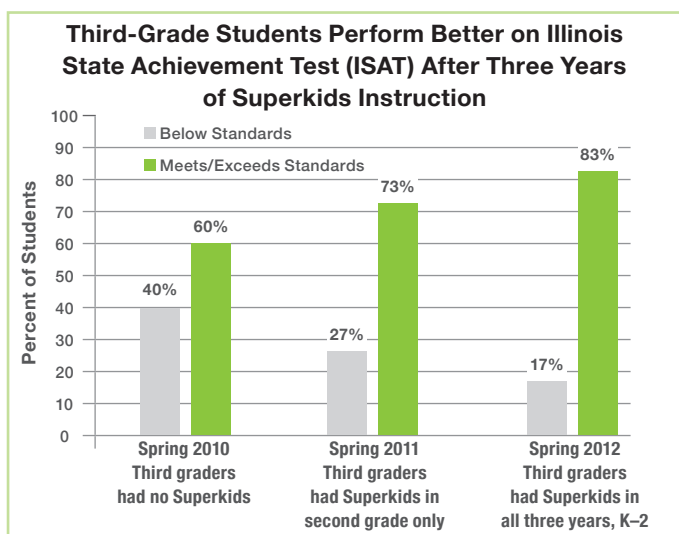
To determine if these findings could be attributed to Superkids, Dr. D’Agostino conducted a quasi-experimental, longitudinal study that employed an analytical method called hierarchical linear modeling. In addition to finding that groups with more Superkids instruction experienced greater growth on DIBELS than groups with less Superkids instruction (with effect sizes as high as .24), his analysis found that the gains were attributable neither to initial differences in student ability nor to teachers’ increased experience teaching the program over time. The most likely explanation for the statistically significant improvement was the Superkids program itself.

Dr. D’Agostino also analyzed Neshaminy’s third-grade data from the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) from 2010 through 2013. He compared the district’s average third-

2 English Language Learners’ Third-Grade Scores Improve Dramatically After Using Superkids in K-2

Union Ridge School is located in Harwood Heights, Illinois, an inner suburb of Chicago. Thirty percent of the students are English Language Learners. The school began implementing Superkids in kindergarten during the 2008–09 school year. The following year, they implemented Superkids in kindergarten through second grade. The 2011–12 school year was the first in which third graders had been given Superkids instruction in kindergarten through second grade.

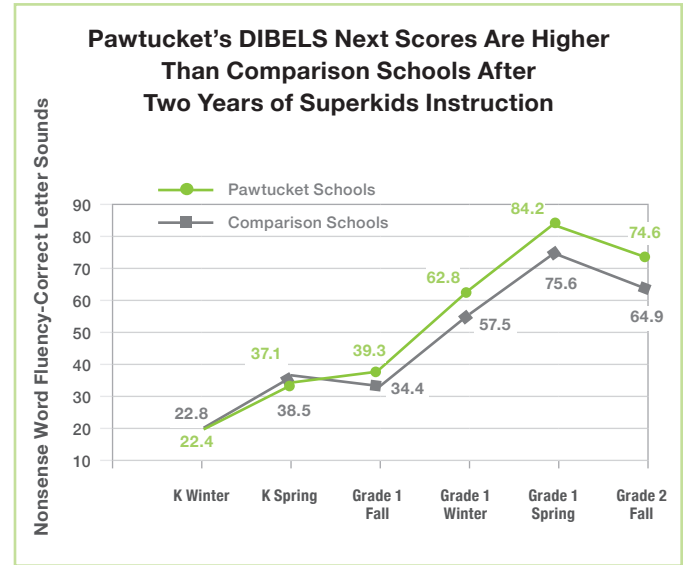
As third graders had more Superkids instruction, the percentage who met or exceeded standards on the Illinois Standard Achievement Test steadily improved. In spring of 2012, when third graders had been taught with Superkids in K-2, the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards was 23 points higher than in spring 2010, when third graders had no instruction with Superkids. The improvement for ELL students was even more dramatic: the percentage of English Language Learners who met or exceeded standards in spring 2012 was 30 points higher than in spring 2010. ■



3 Longitudinal Study With Control Group Shows Strong Results After Two Years of Superkids

Dr. Kenneth Wong of Brown University and Magnolia Consulting of Charlottesville, Virginia, were commissioned to conduct a four-year longitudinal study in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, near Providence. The 5,227 students in this study were highly diverse: 39% were Hispanic, 26% were Black, 27% were White, 85% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and 13% were English Language Learners. DIBELS Next data were collected from all ten elementary schools in Pawtucket and from eight similar schools in a nearby district that had adopted a different reading program. In addition, teachers, principals, and parents in Pawtucket were asked to complete surveys.

After two years of Superkids instruction, Pawtucket students scored higher on DIBELS Next Nonsense Word



Fluency than the comparison schools. Nonsense Word Fluency is a key indicator of students' knowledge of the alphabetic principle and their ability to blend letters from left to right. In addition, teachers, principals, and parents reported high satisfaction with the Superkids program. ■

Key Stakeholders in Pawtucket Are Positive About Superkids

STAKEHOLDER	QUESTION	RESPONSE
Principals (n=8)	Would you recommend the Superkids program to other schools?	100% responded yes
Teachers (n=84)	Would you recommend the Superkids program to other teachers?	79% responded yes
Parents (n=1,043)	Do you think the Superkids program has been effective for your child this year?	85% responded yes

4

Superkids Produces Superior Results in Two Large-Scale Treatment/Control Studies

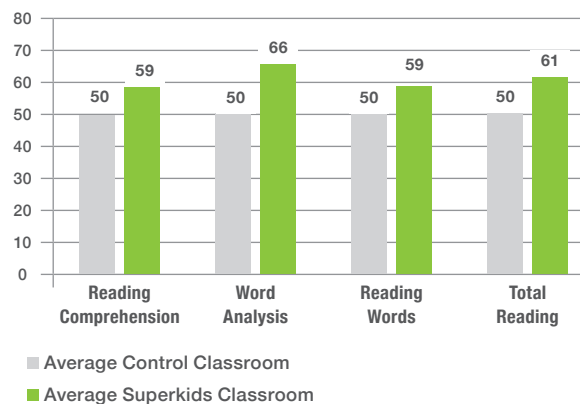
The Superkids program was tested in two large-scale, national quasi-experiments, one by Dr. Geoffrey Borman, professor at the University of Wisconsin, and the other by Dr. Jerome D'Agostino, associate professor at The Ohio State University.

In Dr. Borman's study, 23 kindergarten classrooms that used Superkids as their core reading curriculum were compared to 20 classrooms in the same schools that used traditional basal reading programs. These schools were located in six states in different regions of the country. The demographic characteristics, teachers' experience, and baseline reading achievement of the 390 students in the Superkids classrooms were very similar to those of the 360 students in the control classrooms. The only meaningful difference between the two groups of classrooms was the reading program used. Students were tested at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the school year with the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT). Results showed that the Superkids students' performance on the end-of-year test was superior to the control group's in all reading domains tested. Effect sizes ranged from 0.11 to 0.25.*

"Quantitative studies of published reading programs using such a broad national sample of schools, classrooms, teachers, and students are rare," said Dr. Borman. "These results bear serious consideration by any school seeking to improve its reading program. This study demonstrates the potential for widespread, cost-effective improvement of literacy through the implementation of Superkids."

The study conducted by Dr. D'Agostino also compared Superkids classrooms to control classrooms, but used control classrooms in different schools. His sample consisted of 21 kindergarten classrooms using Superkids

ITBS Percentile Rank of Average Superkids Classroom Compared to Average Control Classroom



in 11 schools and 22 similar classrooms using other reading programs in 11 demographically similar schools. The percentages of low-income students and students of various racial/ethnic groups in the sample were nationally representative. Schools were located in seven states in different regions of the country. The 382 Superkids students and 368 control students were tested at the beginning and end of the year with the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS).

Results of Dr. D'Agostino's analysis corroborate the results of Dr. Borman's study. At the end of the school year, Superkids students outperformed control students in four measures of reading skills. Effect sizes were greater than in Dr. Borman's study, ranging from 0.23 to 0.41. "These effect sizes are large for whole-classroom programs implemented for a full school year," Dr. D'Agostino said. "The effect sizes mean that the *average classroom* using Superkids performed from 9 to 16 percentiles higher than the average control classroom after one year of the Superkids program." Dr. Borman's study was conducted during the 2006–07 school year. Dr. D'Agostino's study took place in the 2007–08 school year. ■

* Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2009). Student and teacher outcomes of the Superkids quasi-experimental study. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 14, 207–225.

5

Superkids: More Effective, More Efficient, and Less Costly

A number of state and federal programs have proven less effective, less efficient, and more costly than Superkids. Title I is a federal program that has spent hundreds of billions of dollars in funds targeted to low-income children since its beginning in 1965. Tennessee Project STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Ratio), a well-known four-year experiment that tested the effect of reducing class sizes from 25 students to 15 in grades K–3, cost an estimated \$1,800 per student per year.

More Cost-Effective Than STAR

In Dr. Geoffrey Borman’s national study (see previous page), he compared Superkids’s effect sizes to those for the above two programs. He found that the Superkids program’s effect sizes, which ranged from 0.11 to 0.25 in his study, were comparable to those from Tennessee Project STAR, which were 0.11 to 0.22. In another national study by Dr. Jerome D’Agostino (see previous page), the Superkids program’s effect sizes (0.23 to 0.41) were larger than Tennessee Project STAR’s. In other words, the Superkids program, with a cost of about \$50 per student per year, produced larger effects on student achievement than Tennessee Project STAR, which cost an estimated \$1,800 per student per year.

Double the Results of Title I

Dr. Borman also found that the Superkids program’s effect sizes were larger than the average effect (0.11) achieved by Title I programs across 29 years of federal evaluations. In fact, the average effect size from Dr. Borman’s and Dr. D’Agostino’s studies was double that of Title I.

More Efficient in Less Teaching Time

In addition to test data, Drs. Borman and D’Agostino analyzed teacher-interview responses. Both researchers found that the superior effects of the Superkids program were achieved despite the fact that Superkids teachers reported spending less time per day teaching language arts than control teachers (105 minutes compared to 132 minutes in Dr. Borman’s study and 99 minutes compared to 141 minutes in Dr. D’Agostino’s study). According to Dr. Borman, “Superkids appeared to offer a more efficient overall language arts program in that it produced stronger achievement effects, but demanded less overall time to teach.”

In both studies, Superkids teachers also reported spending a greater proportion of their language arts time teaching Superkids than control teachers spent teaching their core reading programs (79% compared to 44% in Dr. Borman’s study and 91% compared to 49% in Dr. D’Agostino’s study). “Because the Superkids program integrates reading, writing, spelling, and grammar, teachers likely saw less need to supplement Superkids with other literacy materials, and thereby may have realized important savings both in terms of time and money,” said Dr. Borman.

Greater Teacher Satisfaction

Finally, teachers in both studies reported significantly greater satisfaction with Superkids than control teachers reported with their core reading programs. On a 5-point scale, Superkids teachers in both studies combined reported greater overall satisfaction (4.65 versus 3.85), greater perceived effectiveness (4.74 versus 3.90), greater perceived motivation of students (4.83 versus 3.75), and easier implementation (4.63 versus 3.95) than control teachers.

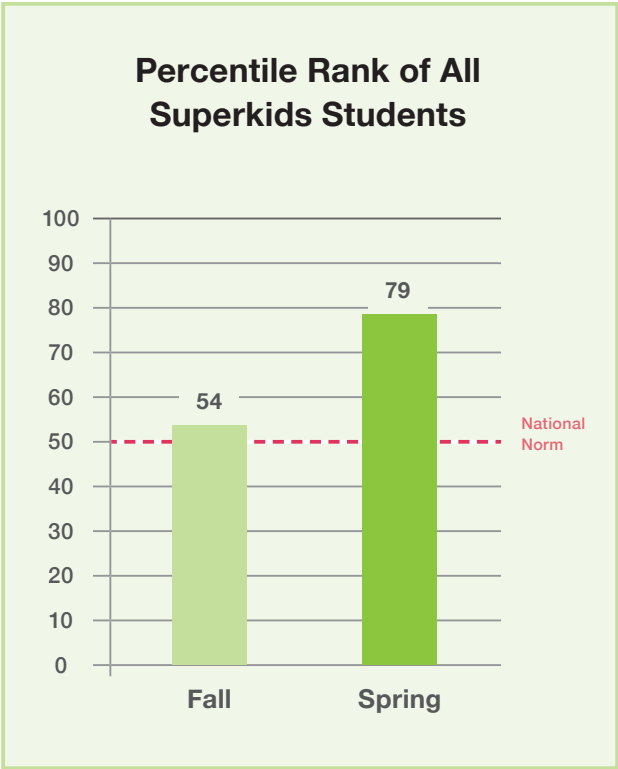
Dr. D’Agostino concluded, “The evidence...indicates that Superkids is a complete program that is easy and efficient to implement, and that produces positive learning outcomes that are most vital for student success.” ■

Throughout this document, student results are often presented as average or median percentile ranks. Such results were calculated by first determining the average or median scale score for the relevant test, then using percentile rank tables provided by the test’s publisher to determine the percentile rank of the average or median scale score.

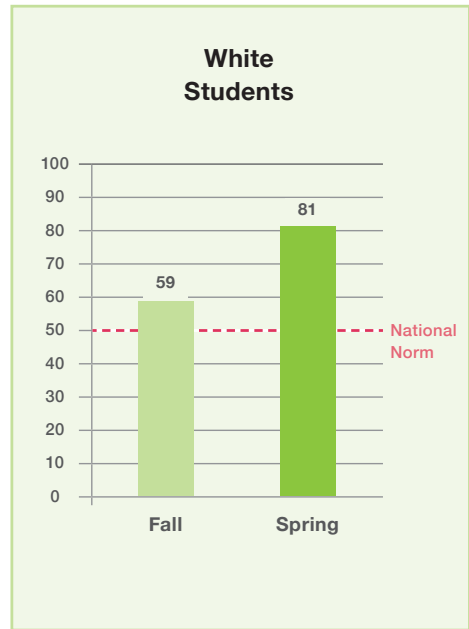
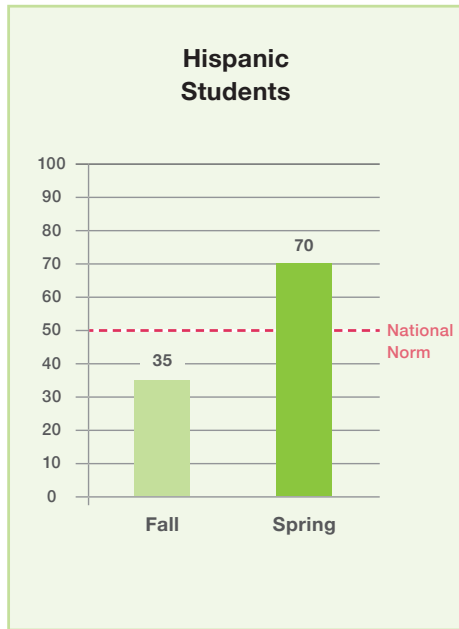
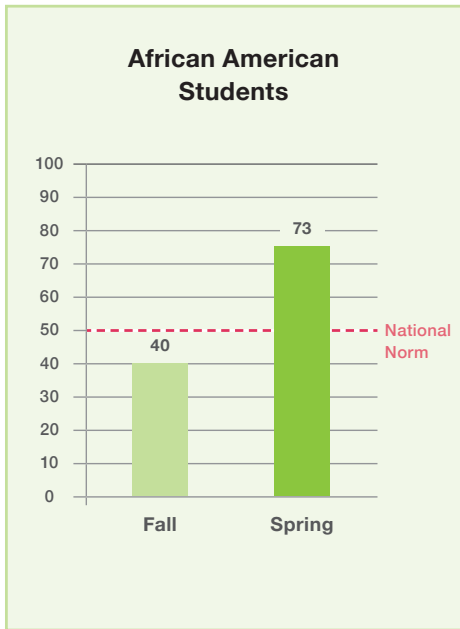
6

3,200 Students Move From 54th to 79th Percentile, on Average, in One Year

The Superkids Reading Program was tested in a national trial involving 3,200 kindergarten students in 193 classrooms. These classrooms were in 83 schools in 22 states. The ethnic/racial mix of the student sample (12% African American, 17% Hispanic, 66% White, and 5% other) reflected the nation as a whole. In both years of the study, students took the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT) in the fall and spring. The results showed that the students started kindergarten on average at the 54th percentile in reading compared to children nationally and ended kindergarten on average at the 79th percentile—a 25 percentile point gain. If these students had merely kept pace with students nationally, they would have stayed at the 54th percentile at the end of kindergarten.

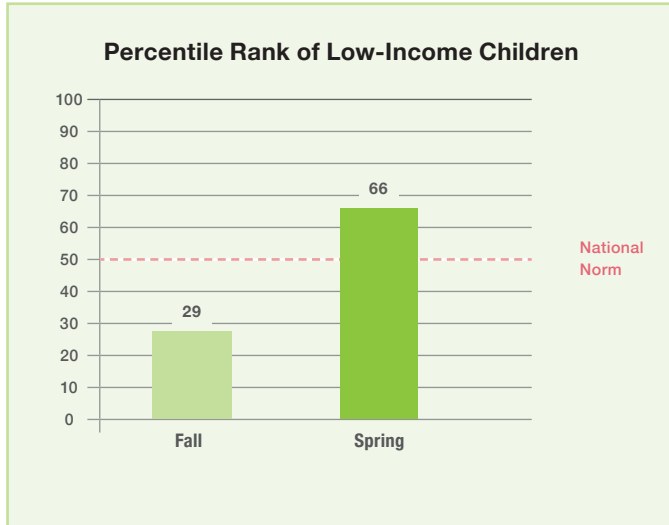


Percentile Ranks of Student Groups

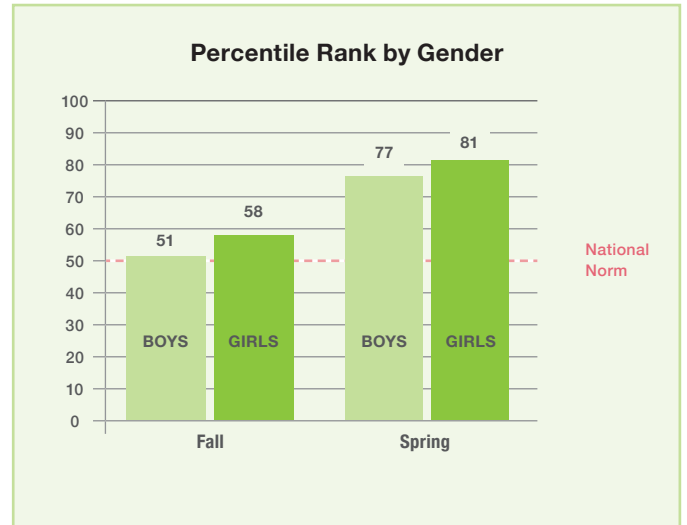


Students of all ethnicities made dramatic progress after one year of Superkids instruction. By spring, averages for all students—African American, Hispanic, and White—were at or above the 70th percentile.

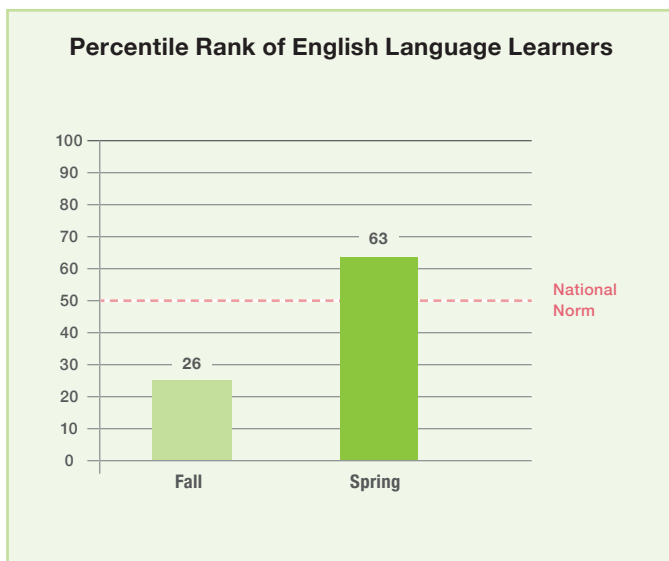
Low-income children scored on average at the 29th percentile in the fall. In the spring, this group scored at the 66th percentile, well above the national norm and a gain of 37 percentile points. Low-income children made up 29% of the population tested.



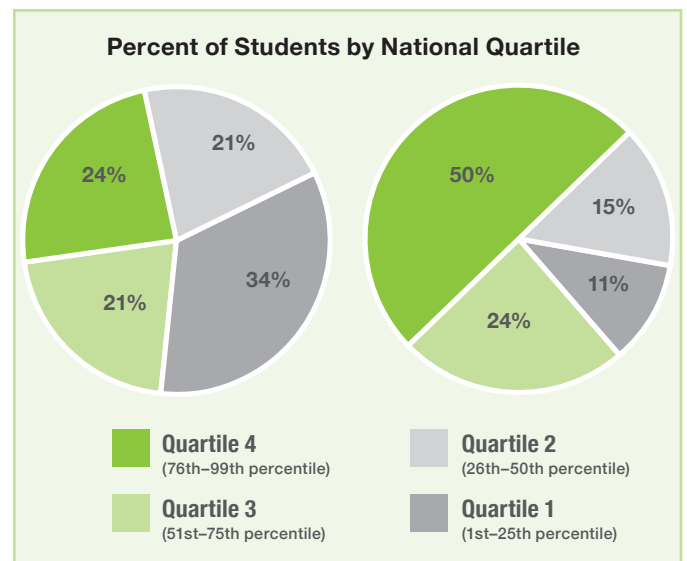
The gender gap between boys' and girls' achievement was reduced by nearly half after one year of Superkids instruction. This gender gap in reading is typically observed in the earliest years of school, and it grows wider over time. Educators increasingly believe that it is critical for boys to get a strong start in reading in the primary grades.



English Language Learners scored on average far below the national norm at the 26th percentile in the fall. By spring, this group made striking gains, finishing the year above the national norm at the 63rd percentile, a gain of 37 percentile points. English Language Learners made up 8% of the population tested.



Students of all abilities made dramatic gains after only one year of Superkids instruction. On the fall test, 34% of students scored in the lowest quartile. By spring, only 11% of students scored in this quartile. High-achieving students also made gains. By spring, twice as many students—*fully half of all students tested*—scored in the highest quartile. This study was conducted during the 2006–07 and 2007–08 school years. ■



7 Two Studies Show Strong Two-Year Impact of Superkids

The Superkids Reading Program was tested in a national trial involving more than 400 students during their kindergarten and first-grade years.

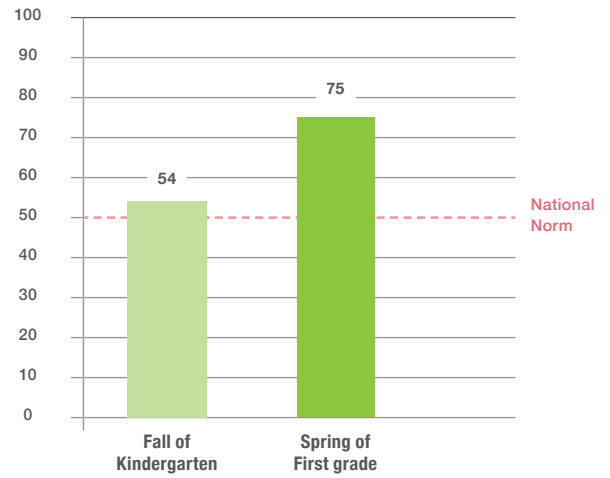
These children were enrolled in 36 classrooms in 18 schools located in Florida, Kentucky, Illinois, Massachusetts, Texas, and Wisconsin. Students were given the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT-10) in fall and spring of both years. The results showed that students started kindergarten on average at the 54th percentile in reading compared to children nationally and ended first grade on average at the 75th percentile—a 21-point gain.

If these children had merely progressed at a normal rate, they would have ended first-grade at about the 54th percentile. This study was conducted during the 2006–07 and 2007–08 school years.

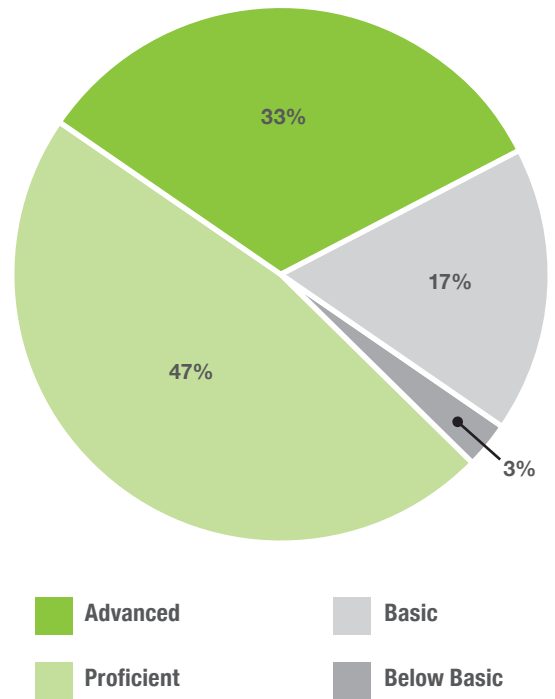
In a separate study, 370 first-grade students in 10 schools took part in a study of the Superkids Reading Program. Schools were located in Arizona, Illinois, Ohio, Maryland, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin. Students were given the Stanford Early School Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SESAT-10) in fall and spring of the school year. About 90% of the students in the study were taught with Superkids in both kindergarten and first grade.

Results of analysis show that, after two years of instruction with the Superkids program, 80% of first graders achieved at the Proficient or Advanced levels of the SESAT-10. This means that the students in this study were well on their way to entering the intermediate grades with a solid foundation. In light of the fact that two-thirds of American fourth graders read below the Proficient level, according to the 2013 Nation’s Report Card from the U.S. Department of Education, these figures are particularly important. Solid literacy instruction in the primary grades is the way to prevent reading failure and ensure academic success in the years beyond. This study was conducted during the 2009–10 school year. ■

Median Percentile Rank of Superkids Students



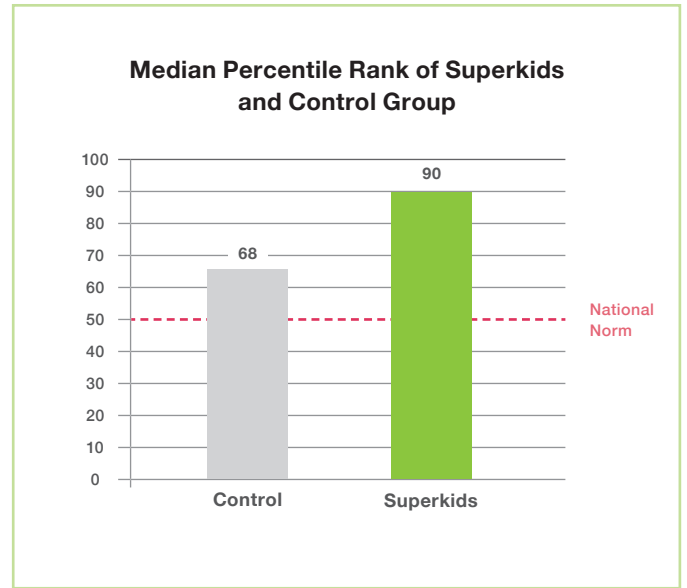
Percent of First-Grade Students Meeting SESAT-10 Performance Standards After Two Years of Superkids



8

Treatment/Control Study by CREP Shows “Extremely Positive” Results

The Center for Research on Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis conducted a quasi-experiment in two Texas schools. The sample consisted of 152 children in eight kindergarten classrooms that used Superkids as their core reading program and 120 similar students in seven kindergarten classrooms that used other reading programs (the control group). At the end of the year, researchers administered the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. According to CREP, “The results were extremely positive favoring the Superkids students.” The median percentile rank for the Superkids students was 90, while the median percentile rank of the control group was 68. Effect sizes ranged from 0.27 to 0.46. This study was conducted in the 2005–06 school year. ■



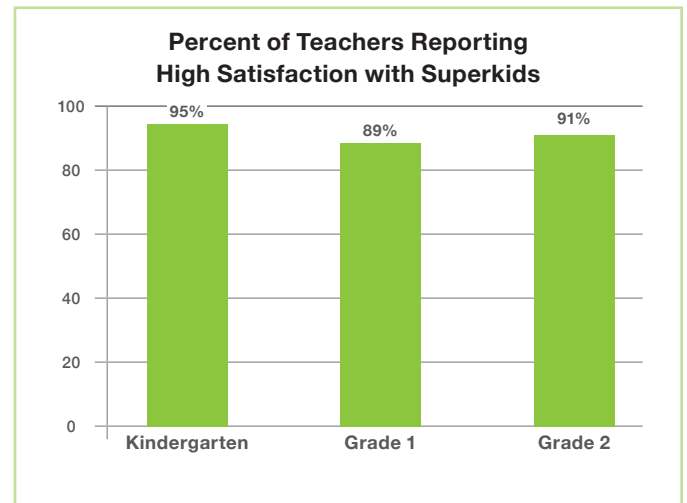
9

Teachers Give Superkids Top Ratings

In May 2011, 691 teachers who used the Superkids program as their core reading curriculum in kindergarten, first grade, or second grade took part in an online survey. Dr. Walter Heinecke of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia analyzed the data.

Key Findings

- 88% of the teachers who reported that they’ve used programs other than Superkids say Superkids is more effective than those programs.
- 96% of respondents said they would recommend Superkids to colleagues.
- On a 5-point scale, with 5 the highest rating, teachers scored Superkids 4.5 on average:



- 4.5 for its effectiveness teaching students how to read



- 4.5 for its effectiveness motivating students to learn



- 4.5 for ease of use

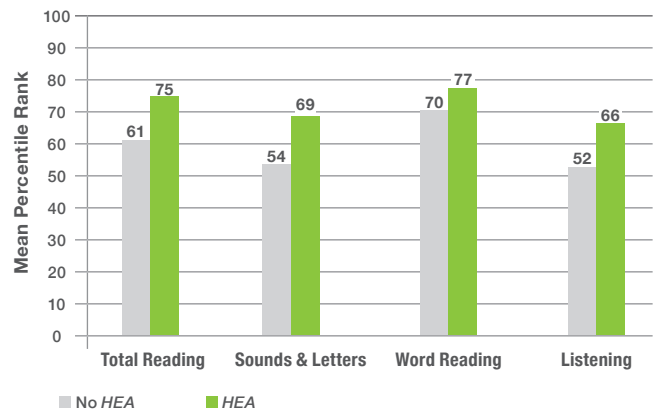


10 Two Studies Show the Effectiveness of *Happily Ever After* in Improving Early Literacy Skills

In a national study, 224 kindergarten students were given the Stanford Early School Achievement Test (SESAT) at the beginning of the school year. These students attended six schools in five different states. Of the 224 students, 114 had received instruction the year before in pre-K or transitional-K using *Happily Ever After* (HEA), while the other 110 students did not receive instruction with this program. The SESAT test at the beginning of kindergarten consists of three subtests: Sounds & Letters, Word Reading, and Listening. These three scores produce a composite Total Reading score. The students who had HEA in pre-K scored higher on every subtest. On average, HEA students scored 14 percentile rank points higher on Total Reading, 15 points higher on Sounds & Letters, 7 points higher on Word Reading, and 14 points higher on Listening. This study took place in the 2009–2010 school year.

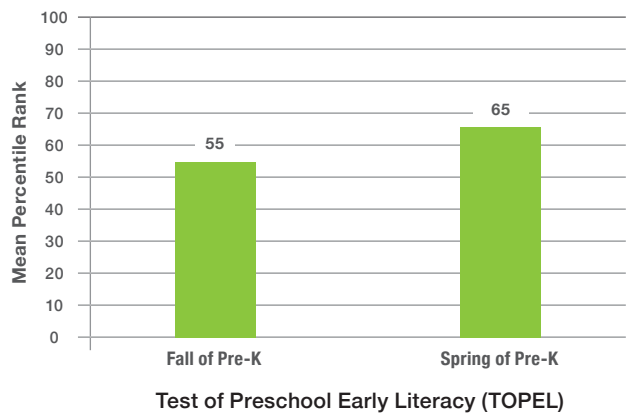
In another study, HEA was used as the main early literacy curriculum in three preschool classrooms in and near Chicago, Illinois. The population of students in these classrooms was 51% White, 37% African American, and 11% Hispanic. Students showed significant growth on the Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL), gaining ten percentile rank points from fall to spring on average. The difference in average mean scores from fall to spring is statistically significant. These gains indicate that students acquired substantially more pre-reading skills than comparable students did in the national norming group. If they had grown at the same rate as their peers, their average percentile rank would have remained the same. This study took place during the 2008–2009 school year. ■

Students Who Had HEA in Pre-K Start Kindergarten With Stronger Pre-Reading Skills



Stanford Early School Achievement Test – Fall 2009

HEA Produces Accelerated Growth in Early Literacy Skills in Pre-K



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